

Mr. REID. Madam President, I object to any further proceedings with respect to this joint resolution.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The joint resolution will be placed on the calendar in accordance with rule XIV.

NEVADA TRAGEDY

Mr. REID. Madam President, yesterday morning a man walked into a pancake house in Carson City, NV, our capital, and proceeded to—with, I am told, an AK-47—first shoot and kill some poor woman outside the pancake house, and he then walked inside and started shooting with this automatic weapon and killed three National Guardsmen and another innocent person. We have a number of people who are in the hospital, and we hope no more die. We are still learning the details of this tragedy, but we do know five are dead. The shooter then killed himself following this rampage he went on.

The National Guardsmen—as I understand, there were five of them there having breakfast prior to their duties when this madman walked in and killed them. One of the five was a woman who was an assistant to one of my outstanding employees, a colonel in the Nevada Army National Guard. He is an airman, and she was his assistant when he does his duty out there. She was killed.

It is sad, this violence around us, even in little Carson City, NV, where citizen soldiers—sacrificing their time to defend our country—are killed having pancakes at a little restaurant. My thoughts go out to the victims, and I appreciate their commitment to Nevada and this country.

What else can you say, Madam President? Your heart goes out to these people who are going through such a turmoil today, trying to figure out why this happened. It is hard to imagine such a terrible act taking place in this quiet little town. The legislature is out of session, which is when the town picks up a little bit. There is not much going on in Carson City, not as you would have with the buzz of a capital when the legislature is in session. I spent three legislative sessions in Carson City. My kids went to school in Carson City when I was the Lieutenant Governor.

I wish all the citizens of Carson City well as they begin the process of healing after this shocking event.

JOB CREATION

Mr. REID. Madam President, this fall the Democrats are hoping to find Republican allies willing to reach across the aisle for the sake of creating jobs in America, for the sake of putting people back to work. For 8 months now, Republicans have wasted our time on partisan politics regarding issues that should have been so simple, such as funding the government for last year.

We were forced to deal with that for months. Then, when we finished that, we went to do something that happens as a matter of fact around here. Not that it is unimportant, but there is no reason for our country to default on the debts we have. Extending the debt ceiling doesn't allow us to spend money on more items, it simply allows us to pay our debts.

Take, for example, Ronald Reagan. Ronald Reagan is somebody whom Republicans idolize, and I have no problem with that. He was a good President and did some good things for our country—lots of good things. I liked him very much as a person and as a President. He asked us 18 different times to raise the debt ceiling, and we did it every time—every time. But this time, no thanks. The Republicans forced us to spend months on raising the debt ceiling.

They have also used unrelated amendments and procedural stall tactics to kill good pieces of legislation that have always had the support of Democrats and Republicans. Take, for example, the Economic Development Administration. They blocked that, something that has been going on for 35 years creating jobs. This piece of legislation alone would have created 314,000 jobs. They killed it. The EDA has worked with little businesses, universities, and economically challenged areas to create jobs, as I said, for three decades. Actually, it has been 4½ decades.

For nearly 2 months, they held up efforts to reauthorize the Small Business Innovation and Research Program before finally killing it altogether. This legislation would have helped small businesses, small technology companies, which have invented everything from the electric toothbrush to how to put armor on a Bradley fighting vehicle. These small business innovation loans were terrific for bringing out the innovation and creativity of the American people, creating thousands of jobs. They forced that bill off the floor.

The fate of these two pieces of legislation alone cost more than one-half million jobs—more than 500,000 jobs. But not only did they take away these two pieces of legislation—and there are many others but speaking of these two—their obstructionistic tactics also cost us lots of time. Every moment wasted on procedural hurdles—and we have spent months on these useless amendments—was a moment we weren't creating jobs.

Republicans held up the work of Congress for months in the hope of defeating the President. And this is not something I have made up. My counterpart, the Republican leader, has said that is his No. 1 issue—making sure President Obama is not reelected. But this effort to defeat President Obama has also held up our economic recovery. We saw the toll in last month's job report, showing unemployment holding steady. For the eighth month in a row we have created private-sector jobs—

we didn't create many—last month, about 20,000.

Because of what is going on around the country, with the Republicans' austerity programs, there are lots of government jobs being cut. Each of us, from New York, Illinois, and Nevada, has had local governments really being cut to the bone—police and fire. These are the jobs that people need very much.

Madam President, I hope the Republicans have gotten the stalling tactics out of their system and really will work with us to create jobs. Hopefully, the Senate is now moving forward with this patent bill, the America Invents Act. This bill will reform the Nation's outdated patent system that has almost 1 million patents waiting to be looked at. Any one of those patents could be a new benefit—something that will create jobs and allow people who have such great ingenuity in America to put their product on line.

We are told that this reform of our Nation's outdated patent system will allow us to create almost 300,000 jobs, and it will clear up a 3-year backlog in patent applications so inventors might be able to invent the next iPod or iPad or electric car or whatever other interesting thing that makes America so great. I hope the spirit of bipartisanship comes into being now, because Congress and this country cannot afford to waste any more time.

There are two things we can do right away to create lots of jobs. First, extend the authorization of the FAA bill. Let me explain what this is all about.

We passed an FAA bill, a good bill, passed overwhelmingly, Democrats and Republicans. It went to the House and they put it in some dark hole over there, and finally they gave us a bill back. It is different than our bill, and here is how it is different. The National Mediation Board set a new rule. It is something called democracy. What it means is that in a labor election, the majority wins. Under Republican dominance in years past, if you had a group of people who were trying to be unionized, and let's say there were 1,000 and that is how many were in the work unit and there was an election held and 600 people turned out for that election, 450 voted, yes, we think we should be able to collectively bargain with our employer, under the old rules that is not enough; 450 out of 600 is not enough. You would have to get a majority of the people in the unit.

I ask my friend from New York, the Presiding Officer, and my friend from Illinois, because I have asked myself, under rules like that, none of us would have been elected. Of the millions and millions of people in New York and Illinois and the 3 million people in Nevada, I won by 5 percent last election. I got a majority of the people who were registered to vote. That is how you win in America, not a majority of everyone in the State, because no one would be elected if that in fact were the case.

But that is how the Republicans want to change the rules. They want go back

and say a simple majority of those voting is not enough. You have to have a majority of everybody in the union. And, as I indicated, based on our elections, it would mean each of us would have to get a majority of everyone in the State.

So they stuck that provision in the bill saying, no, a majority is not enough; you have to have a majority of everyone in the unit. It is this kind of antidemocratic issue they placed in this legislation. I would hope they would take that out. They haven't been willing to do that.

If we can reform our antiquated air traffic control system, it will bring us into the modern world where we are no longer depending on Second World War technology; that is, radar, and we can move into the modern world as most all countries have, where we would have GPS, and it will create lots and lots of jobs, hundreds of thousands of jobs which are so badly needed. Ray LaHood, Secretary of Transportation, thinks it is essential that we get this done for the safety and security of our Nation and certainly to create lots and lots of jobs.

Second, we must authorize Federal spending for our Nation's highways. About 1.8 million construction jobs in highway and mass transit projects are at stake. If we don't extend this bill, they will be gone, almost 2 million jobs.

So we will be happy to consider a bipartisan idea to get the economy going again. I have talked about two things.

Here are two ideas Republicans have supported in the past: payroll tax cuts and extension of unemployment insurance. Extending the payroll tax cut could save 972,000 American jobs next year alone. Extending unemployment insurance during these tough economic times would save 528,000 American jobs. They have agreed to these in the past.

Speaker BOEHNER and Leader CANTOR wrote to the President yesterday and they said, Our differences should not preclude us from taking action in areas where there is common ground.

I hope they would agree that extending unemployment benefits and cutting the payroll tax are agreements that are common sense. So I agree with them, our differences should not preclude us from taking action in areas where there is common agreement. Let's start with the four commonsense measures I have talked about: the FAA bill; of course, we have to do the extension of the payroll tax cuts; do the unemployment insurance; and, of course, FAA. I would hope we can move on these as quickly as possible.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leaders' time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the

Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the second half.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. I see the Senator from New Hampshire is here, and I ask that she be permitted to speak immediately after I have concluded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE BUDGET

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, tomorrow night we will hear a speech from the President of the United States about an issue that affects every single one of us in America. It affects millions in a personal way and all of us indirectly. It is the state of our economy. It is an economy that has been wracked by a recession which has gone on way too long. Even the President concedes that we had hoped we would have emerged at this point, but we still have not. I think it is important for us to focus on the reality of life even for working families in America. Too many working families today are struggling to survive paycheck to paycheck.

Over the last 10 or 20 years, we have seen a decline in the rate of growth in real wages, which means that families, even working families, aren't earning enough to keep up with the cost of living. They are falling a little bit behind each year.

They recently surveyed working families across America and asked them a basic question. They said: If you had an emergency in your family and needed to come up with \$2,000 in the next 30 days, could you find that \$2,000 either in your savings or borrowed? Forty-seven percent of working families said they could not come up with \$2,000 in 30 days. Now \$2,000 is the cost of an uneventful trip to an emergency room. It is an indication of the vulnerability of families all across America.

I am also concerned about the fact that, as we speak about the economy, we know many families are doing the right thing, trying to shed debt. We see the credit card debt in America declining as fewer and fewer people borrow against their credit cards, understanding the interest rates they are going to pay are way too high and it is impossible to keep up with your debt if you pile it all on credit cards. People are reluctant to purchase because they are afraid of debt, and vulnerable, with the thought of losing their jobs or per-

haps seeing a decline in their wages. That is the reality of life for working families across America. It is the reality I have seen in Illinois and a reality that affects us nationwide. The President will address that tomorrow night, as he should.

I think there are ways to deal with it, but here is the caution I wish to add: We are fixed on the theme of our Nation's deficit and debt, and we should be, because as we borrow 40 cents for every dollar we spend, we create an unsustainable situation for future generations. That is a fact.

I have been party to the Bowles-Simpson Commission, where I voted for their report. I have worked with the Gang of Six, a bipartisan effort in the Senate which has more than 30 Senators showing an interest in this approach. So I seriously believe this deficit and debt are a problem for us in the long term. But I might remind my colleagues on both sides of the aisle that Bowles-Simpson, this bipartisan Presidential commission, concluded that we should not hit the brakes on spending, should not hit the brakes on government activity too soon because of the recession. In fact, they recommended that we wait another year, with a serious effort to reduce the deficit coming after the recession.

The logic behind it is obvious. It is virtually impossible to balance the budget of the United States with 14 million people out of work. You need to put Americans back to work earning a good paycheck, paying their taxes, and then you can start building this economy and building toward a balanced budget. I hope we keep that in mind as we talk about what we are facing, as we try to create a climate to create more jobs in America.

It is interesting to me, the President will propose to extend the payroll tax cut for working families across America. It accounts for 2 percent of income. That, to me, is sensible. Put spending power in the hands of working families, lower and middle-income families. These are the people who are struggling paycheck to paycheck. We have done that. We should continue to do that.

The criticism from the Republican side of the aisle is, no, you shouldn't allow a tax cut for middle-income families and those in lower income categories unless you pay for it. Interestingly enough, that is exactly the opposite position from what they took when they talked about tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. When the Republicans wanted to see tax cuts for those making over \$250,000 a year, they say we don't have to pay for it. But when we talk about tax cuts for working families, middle-income families, all of a sudden they become deficit hawks and say you have to pay for those tax cuts. I think we should continue the 2-percent payroll tax cuts to help working families. I think that is good. I also think we ought to extend unemployment benefits.